


Cymdeithas y Cenhedloedd Unedig Menai  
United Nations Associations – Menai

R A Shirres – Chwefror 2025  
R A Shirres – February 2025

**Y Cenhedloedd Unedig:  
Gweithio dros Stiwardiaeth Ecolegol Fyd-eang**



**The United Nations:  
Working for Global Ecological Stewardship**

a presentation by:  
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Secretary, United Nations Association - Menai  
Date: February 2025

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The United Nations: Working for Global Ecological Stewardship

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**The United Nations: outlining a history  
of working for global ecological stewardship**

*This presentation will broadly cover*

**Before the United Nations** and subsequent founding of UN  
**Internationalist Vision** of founders the UN & UNESCO  
**The UN charter** – laying the “seeds of growth”  
**UN responds to the ecological enlightenment** of the 1950s to 1980s  
**Within 30 years UN evolves to address global ecological threats**  
**UN confronts need for global sustainability:** biodiversity, climate change, . .  
**By 2000 - UN's global ecological priorities crystallized & treaties pursued**  
**2000 – 2015: setting of Millennium 'Goals followed by SD Goals**  
**UN progress on CC impeded over 40yrs** by fossil fuel interests

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**The United Nations: its precursor**

***To begin at the beginning . .***



**. . the end of the Great War  
. . it is Paris, January 1919**

The Peace Conference ran from January to June, 1919.

Culminated in The Treaty of Versailles, with 15 parts and 440 articles.

Part 1 created the Covenant of **The League of Nations** - precursor to the United Nations.

Lloyd George, Clemenceau & Woodrow Wilson  
In Paris


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**The United Nations: Prelude to its founding**

**The League of Nations (1920)**  
response to First World War.  
Founded on the principle of mutual security and with the aim to end wars.



The League promoted by the US President, Woodrow Wilson. But after Wilson the US became isolationist and refused to join. Germany and Russia were not allowed to join.

**THE GAP IN THE BRIDGE**



Palais des Nations, Geneva

Not without some success. Ultimately it lacked the international support to function effectively.

First half of 20<sup>th</sup> C suffers two world wars, inflicts massive destruction & insecurity to many countries. Resulting in - **catastrophic death toll of over 100 million.**

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**The UNITED NATIONS**  
Founded 24 October 1945



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**Founding of the United Nations: “It can't last” v. “It's our only hope”**  
San Francisco, UN Charter adopted on 26th June 1945



**“We the peoples of the united nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, . . .”**

**Founded with the main objectives to:**

- **maintain international peace & security**
- **develop friendly relations among nations**
- **implement international cooperation in the economic, social, cultural & humanitarian fields**
- **promote respect for human rights**



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## The United Nations: Founding of the United Nations

### UN Resolution 1 (1)

On 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1946, the first\* United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted by consensus as its **very first resolution**. It established a commission of the UN Security Council to ensure, **'the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.'**

\*Central Hall, Westminster

Nuclear testing at Bikini Atoll, July 1946



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## 1945\* Founding of UNESCO - Preamble

The Governments of the States Parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare, that **since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed . . .** . . . that **the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man** and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern . . .

. . . do hereby create the **United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization for the purpose of advancing** through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, **the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind for which the UN organization was established and which its charter proclaims.**





\* Formally established as an organization 4<sup>th</sup> November 1946

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## The UN Charter & Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Environmental Implications



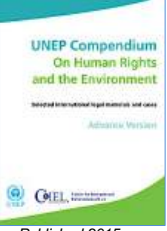
Eleanor Roosevelt with the UDHR, 1948

➤ **Environmental objectives not explicit in the founding UN Charter or UNDHR – but its social & economic provisions lay the foundation for the elaboration of human rights to be incorporated into environmental protection.**

**2015** - The Paris Agreement acknowledges that *"Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights"*.

**70 years on from the UDHR**

➤ **A healthy environment came to be recognised as the foundation of human life.**



Published 2015

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## The United Nations: Founding of the United Nations

When formed the **UN** - environmental concerns were not explicitly on international agenda.

**BUT** within only two decades, deterioration of biosphere increasingly evident.

UN becomes **the** global advocate - for addressing environmental concerns and, ultimately, for championing ecologically sustainable development.

**"The UN Charter bears the seeds of a greater growth which if nourished by governments and peoples, can be made to give forth the fruit of deliverance from our age long perils"**

Abraham H Feller (1921-1952),  
First General Counsel of the United Nations



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## The United Nations: Capacity to Act & National Sovereignty

HERE AN IMPORTANT ASIDE

The United Nations can **only act through consensus**.

**Substantive implementation of actions depend upon consensus.**

It has to be an **inherently democratic institution that depends upon deliberative and participatory engagement processes.**

Multilateral agreements for common actions depend entirely upon a **common informed understanding.**

"International co-operation can exist **ONLY** if states are willing to yield some portion of their **sovereignty** for the common good"

Abraham H Feller (1921-1952),  
First General Counsel of the United Nations

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## The 1950s, 60s & 70s: a global environmental awakening

**1950/1** US House of Rep. Committee Delaney report into use of Chemicals in Food

**1956** Physicist **Gilbert Plass** science paper on role CO<sub>2</sub> in global warming, predicts: a doubling of CO<sub>2</sub> would cause the planet to warm 3.6°C

**1957/8** International Geophysical Year

➤ Advent of space age as USSR launches *Sputnik* (1957), the *US Explorer* (1958)

➤ Rville & Seus key paper ~ 'human gas emissions might cause global warming'

➤ **Roger Rville** testifies to US Congress about rising CO<sub>2</sub> & 'Spaceship Earth'

**1958** ➤ Rville encourages a young **Charles Keeling** to measure global CO<sub>2</sub>

➤ United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (**UNCLOS**) ➤ Convention

**1959** At *US Energy & Man Symposium*, Edward Teller warns of global warming

**1960** UN Convention on the Law of the Sea II (**UNCLOS II**)

**1962** *Our Synthetic Environment*, **Murray Bookchin** & *Silent spring*, **Rachel Carson**

**1963** Nuclear Test Ban Treaty agreed between US & USSR

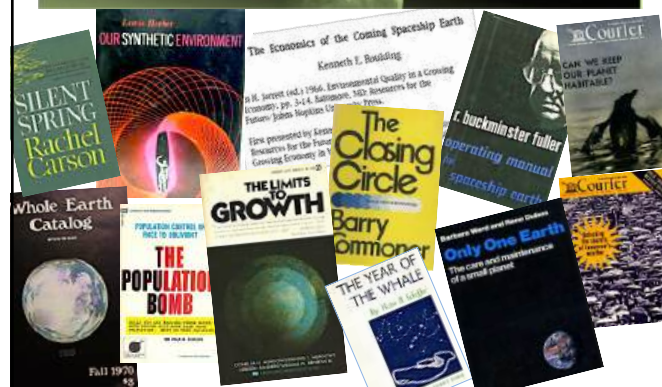
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The 1950s, 60s & 70s: *a global environmental awakening*

- 1964 **IUCN** resolution to protect endangered species
- 1965 US President's Science Advisory Com. report, ***Restoring the Quality of Our Environment***, warns of the harmful effects of fossil fuel emissions
  - > **Aurelio Peccei** gives key speech, *The Challenge of 1970s for the World Today*
  - > US Sierra Club sues New York against a power project, its wins - Sets the precedent for consideration on environmental impact.
- 1966 A decade of the TV series *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau* begins
- 1968 > Intergovernmental Conference for **Rational Use & Conservation of the Biosphere** held in Paris, organised by **UNESCO** with **IUCN**
  - > The creation of the **Club of Rome** by **Aurelio Peccei**
  - > Sweden puts forward to UN's **ECOSOC** the idea of a UN conference focused on human interactions with the environment
  - > Minamata chronic mercury poisoning: Japanese government recognizes chronic scale of incident stemming from 1950s; it kills over 1700 people.
  - > Ecologist **Garret Hardin** publishes ***Traedy of the Commons***

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The 1950s, 60s & 70s: *a global environmental awakening*



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## The 1960s: a global environmental awakening



**Adlai E Stevenson**  
(1900-1965)  
US UN Ambassador.  
From his last major speech to the  
UN Economic & Social Council  
of the United Nations,  
Geneva, Switzerland, July 9, 1965

“We travel together,  
passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on  
its vulnerable reserves of air and soil;  
... preserved from annihilation only by the care,  
the work, and, I will say,  
the love we give our fragile craft.”


Lunar orbit, December 24, 1968



"We came all this way to explore the moon, and the most important thing is that we discovered the earth."  
*William Anders, Apollo 8*

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The 1950s, 60s & 70s: *a global environmental awakening*

- 1969 UNESCO conference: **Man & the Biosphere** 'A View Towards Survival'
- Friends of the Earth founded
  - NATO officially recognizes scale of natural environmental challenges
  - Paul Ehrlich's book *The Population Bomb*, published
- 1970 First **Earth Day** established demonstrated by 20 million Americans.
- US Environmental Protection Agency established
- UNESCO's Man in the Biosphere (MAB) Programme established
- 1971 - **Barry Commoner's** *The Closing Circle: Confronting the Environmental Crisis*
- By 1972 - A WATERSHED YEAR**
- The work of **The Club of Rome\*** projected a future where mankind's growing demands outstrip Earth's capacity to meet the demands. Strontium-90 detectable worldwide due to legacy of atom bomb tests
- The Blue Whale was being hunted towards extinction
- Economically, the world's developed economies were booming. BUT there was now growing evidence nature was paying a price.
- THEN came the **1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment**
- \*Published 12 March, 1970
- 
- The image shows the cover of the book 'The Limits to Growth' by Donella Meadows, J. Dennis Meadows, and David Pines. The title is in large, bold, lowercase letters. Below the title, it says 'A General Systems Approach to the Problems of Growth'. The cover is yellow and has a small graphic of a globe.

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**United Nations Conference on the Human Environment,  
Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972**

AIM: to consider the need for a **common outlook and common principles** to inspire and guide the peoples of the world **in the preservation and enhancement of the human environment**



“We see around us **growing evidence of man-made harm in many regions of the earth: dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; major and undesirable disturbances to the ecological balance of the biosphere; destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources; and gross deficiencies, harmful to the physical, mental and social health of man.**”

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**United Nations Conference on the Human Environment,  
Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972**

**AIM: to consider the need for a common outlook and common principles to inspire and guide the peoples of the world in the preservation and enhancement of the human environment**



This conference established the **United Nations Environment Programme**



India's Prime Minister told the conference, **"Modern man must re-establish an unbroken link with nature and with life."**

Eminent ecologist, Barry Commoner, (1917-2012) presciently argued that the **conference declaration should have gone further** and argued need for industries to change **so that no pollution produced at source**.



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## UNCHE: 26 Principles of the Stockholm Declaration

**Principle 1.** A solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations.

**Principle 2.** Earth's natural resources, including ecosystems, must be safe-guarded for the benefit of present and future.

**Principle 7.** States shall take all possible steps to prevent pollution of the seas.

**Principle 15.** Planning must be applied to human settlements and urbanization . . with a view to avoiding adverse effects on the environment.

**Principle 19.** Education in environmental matters is essential in order to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in protecting . . the environment

**Principle 21\*.** States have . . the sovereign right to exploit their own resources [but also have] the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

\*key description of relationship between sovereignty & international obligation

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## Response of European Economic Community immediately post-Stockholm Conference

*First Summit Conference of the Enlarged Community, Paris, 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October 1972*

**Its start of a decisive focus on environmental policy**

"The Heads of State and Government stressed the value of a Community environment policy. They are therefore requesting the Community Institutions to draw up an action programme with a precise schedule before 31 July 1973."

*Bulletin of the European Communities, Bulletin No.10, 1972*

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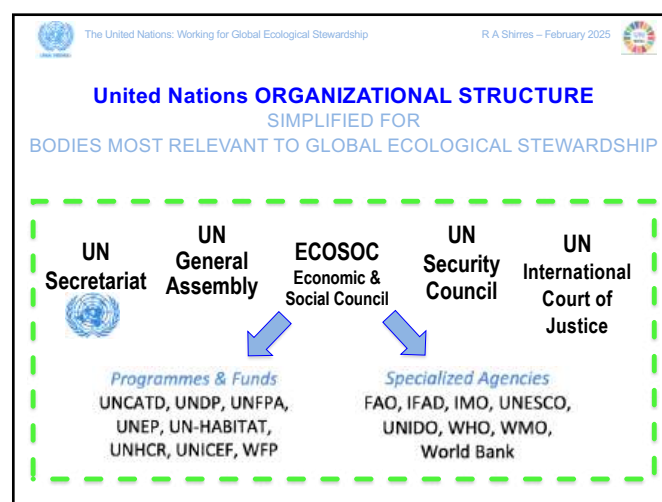
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## European Union (EU)'s growing leadership on International Environmental Policies from mid-1980s



- Sewage Sludge Directive [1986]
- Nitrates Directives [1991]
- Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive [1991]
- Habitats Directive [1992]
- Landfill Directive [1999]
- Water Framework Directive [2000]**
- Large Combustion Plant Directive [2001]
- National Emissions Ceiling Directive [2001]
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive [2001]
- Environmental Noise Directive [2002]
- Freedom of Access to Information Directive [2003]
- Environmental Liability Directive [2004]
- Groundwater Directive [2006]
- Mining Waste Directive [2006]
- Revised bathing Water Directive [2006]
- Floods Directive [2007]
- INSPIRE (Spatial Data) [2007]
- REACH Restriction of Chemicals Directive [2007]
- Air Quality Framework Directive [2008]
- Integrtd Pollution Prevention & Control [2008]
- Marine Strategy Framework Directive [2008]
- Waste Framework Directive [2008]
- Carbon Capture & Storage Directive [2009]
- Renewable Energy Directive [2009]
- Wild Birds Directive [2009]
- Industrial Emissions Directive [2010]
- Environmental impact Assessment Directive [2011]
- Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipmt' Directive [2012]
- Maritime Spatial Planning Directive [2014]
- Invasive Species Directive [2014]

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## UNESCO – of its first three decades

1948 to 1968, many scientific programmes conducted, all on the theme of man's relation to & impact on the resources of the biosphere.

The 1968 Paris 'Biosphere' Conference's - called for a research programme: **\*MAN AND the BIOSPHERE (MAB)** exploring interlinking social, economic and environmental issues



Originally 31 MAB biosphere reserve sites. Now 669 sites (eg. Dyfi) across 129 countries.

UNESCO's international environmental education programme was launched in 1975, ahead of the Tbilisi Conference in 1977.

**"There can be no hope of finding viable solutions to environmental problems unless and until general education, at all levels, is suitably modified to enable people from all walks of life to comprehend, from childhood, the fundamental interactions and interrelationships between man and his environment."**

*Man and his Environment, UNESCO 1979*

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## The 1970s & 80s: the UN strengthens stewardship

- 1976 UN Conference on Human Settlements & Sustainable Development
- 1977 Intergovernmental Conference on **Environmental Education**, Tbilisi
- 1978 UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) founded
- 1979 1<sup>st</sup> World Climate Conference (Promotes work that leads to IPCC)
- 1980 **World Conservation Strategy** published by IUCN
- 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea
- 1983 The World Commission on Environment & Development (WCED) established under the auspices of the UN General Assembly
- 1987 UN Basel Convention on Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Waste and their Disposal
- 1987 **Montreal Protocol** (Ozone protection) under the Vienna Convention
- 1987 Publication of WCED's **Our Common Future** (The Brundtland Report)
- 1988 NASA scientist, James Hansen's testimony before US Congress on CC
- 1990 2<sup>nd</sup> World Climate Conference (Outcomes lead towards UNFCCC)
- Publication of **Caring for the Earth**, by IUCN, UNEP & WWF

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## 1979 ~ 1989 : an increasing focus on climate change

A decade starting & finishing with a major world-conferences

**Calendar of Climate-Related Events 1988-89**

- LENINGRAD
- HAMBURG
- INDIA
- TOKYO
- LONDON
- CANADA
- PARIS
- READING
- BUENOS AIRES

**NASA scientist, James Hansen's testimony before Congress makes a major impact**

\*12 month calendar of US & international meetings on climate science

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## The UN's 'BIG FIVE' Biodiversity Conventions

- The Ramsar Convention (Wetlands of Intern'l Importance) ~ 1971
- The World Heritage Convention ~ 1972
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora & Fauna (CITES) ~ 1975
- Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention) ~ 1979
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) ~ 1992

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## The Threat to Biodiversity

25 biodiversity 'hotspots' making up **only 1.4%\*** of the Earth's land surface contain sole habitats of 44% of all vascular plant species & 35% of four vertebrate groups. \*Previously 11.8% of Earth's land

These habitats have lost at least 70% , mostly 90%, of their original flora.

What we do, or don't do, in the next few decades, shall determine the future of our planet for at least the next 5 million years, or 20 times longer than humans have been humans.

Myers, et al. (2000) Biodiversity hotspots for conservation priorities, Nature, Vol. 403

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## 'Hole in the Ozone' -The Montreal Protocol

(Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer)

Halley Bay, **October 1984**, British Antarctic Survey.

Scientists record **inexplicable 40% decrease in ozone** in the stratosphere over the station. A science paper follows adding to growing evidence of the role of CFCs (Also powerful GHGs), giving further impetus for action.

**Now clearly a serious global problem.** UNEP – having worked on CFCs since 1970s - moved quickly; assembled the science, ramped up scientific & political engagement and promoted an international political process. This very rapid, widespread adoption & implementation is cited as an **example of exceptional international co-operation.** UNEP's role was key.

The **Vienna Convention for Protection of the Ozone Layer** is a Multilateral Environment Agreement agreed at the Vienna Conference of March 1985, **signed up to in 1987** and entered into force in 1988. Climate projections now indicate the ozone layer will return to 1980 levels between 2050 and 2070.

Lat. 75° 36' S, Long. 26° 40' W

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## Climate Change: So Why do we have global warming ?

Essentially: greenhouse gases (GHGs) absorb infra-red radiation (reflected sunlight) this excites GHG molecules, generating heat – with increasing proportion of GHGs in the atmosphere, then the more warming is forced to occur. Higher GHG concentrations produces a 'forcing' effect\*.

### The greenhouse effect

- 1 Sunlight passes through the atmosphere and warms the earth.
- 2 Infrared radiation (IR) is given off by the Earth...
- 3 ... most escapes to outer space, allowing the Earth to cool...
- 4 ... but some infrared radiation is trapped by gases in the air (including CO<sub>2</sub>), keeping the earth warm enough to sustain life.
- 5 **ENHANCED GREENHOUSE EFFECT** Increasing levels of CO<sub>2</sub> increase the amount of heat retained, causing the atmosphere and Earth's surface to heat up.

**(W) Effective radiative forcing from 1750 to 2020**

Driver	Forcing (W m <sup>-2</sup> )
Carbon dioxide	~1.5
Other well-mixed greenhouse gases	~0.5
Climate	~0.1
Stratospheric water vapour	~0.1
Aerosols	~-0.5
Clouds & surface albedo	~-0.4
Land use	~0.1
Solar	~0.1
Total anthropogenic	~1.2

\* Effective radiative forcing (W m<sup>-2</sup>)

<https://essd.copernicus.org/articles/15/2235/2022/sections/>

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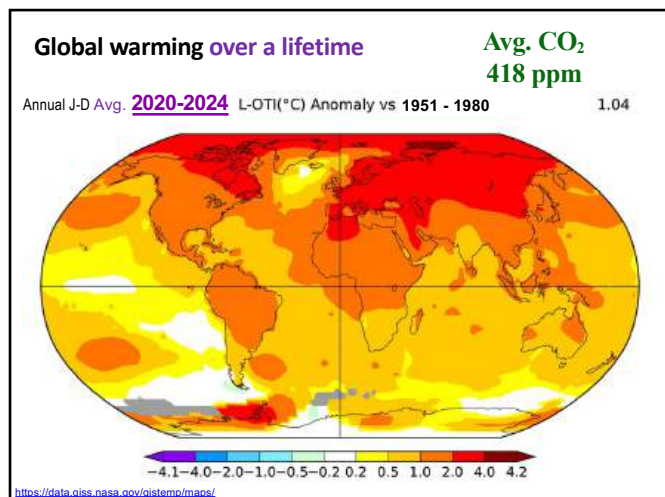
## Global warming over a lifetime

**Avg. CO<sub>2</sub> 310 ppm**

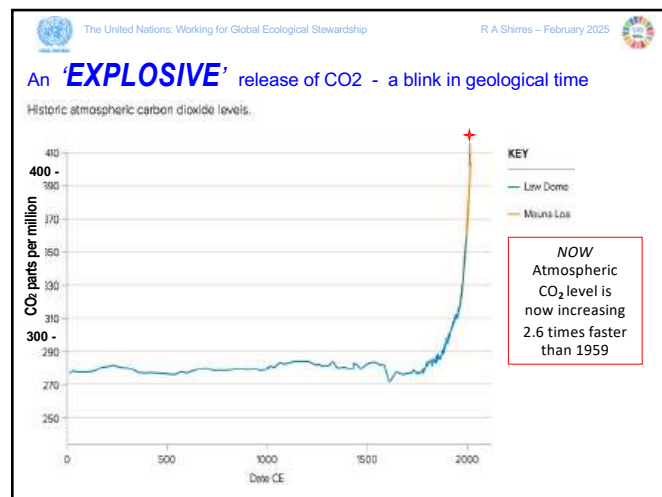
Annual J-D Avg. **1951-1955** L-OTI(°C) Anomaly vs 1951 - 1980 -0.04

<https://data.giss.nasa.gov/oistomo/maps/>

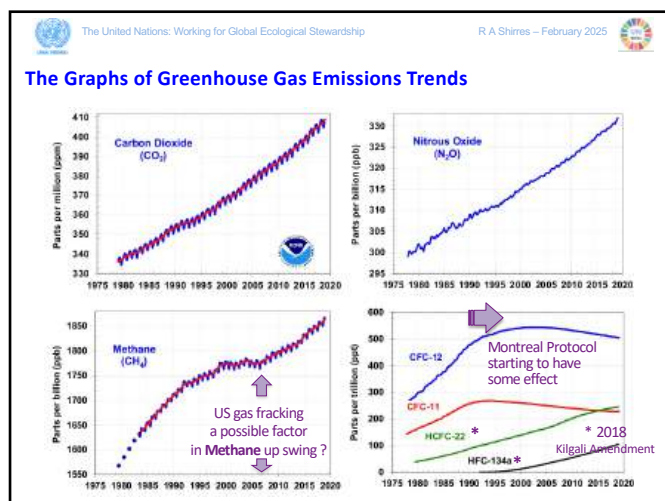
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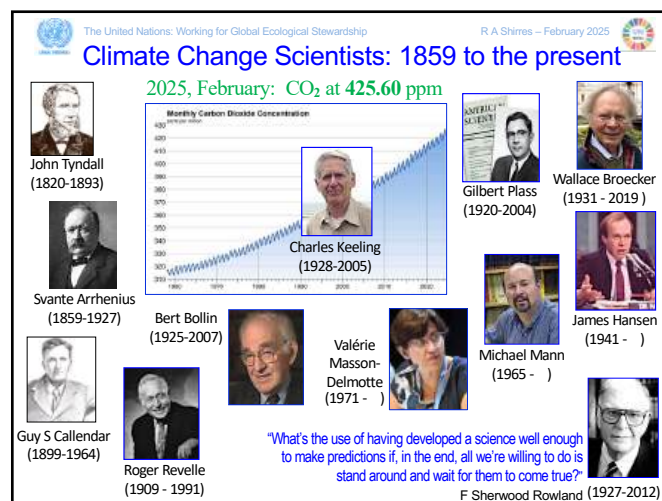
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**UNITED NATIONS – 1988 IPCC & 1992 Rio Earth Summit**

**1988: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)**  
The international body for assessing the science related to climate change. Set up in 1988 by the **World Meteorological Organization** and **United Nations Environment Programme**

**1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro**

**1992: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**  
One of three conventions adopted at the **Rio Earth Summit**.  
Its sister Rio Conventions are:  
**Convention on Biological Diversity & Convention to Combat Desertification.**  
The three are intrinsically linked.  
Adoption of **AGENDA 21** at Rio laid down the principles of sustainable development to promote local agendas for global to the local level actions.

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**UNITED NATIONS – A Key Background to the Earth Summit**

Groundwork for the **Rio Earth Summit** was influenced by two key reports.  
The WCED's 1987 **Our Common Future** (The Brundtland Report)

Most widely used definition of **sustainable development** is that given by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), the Brundtland Commission: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987: 43).


The second - a joint report by IUCN, UNEP & WWF **Caring for the Earth**. Includes a key **ecological** definition of **sustainable development**:  
**"Improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems".**

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**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**




The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994. Today, 197 countries that have ratified the convention and are called Parties to the Convention. Meeting are annually, called 'Conference of the Parties' (COP)



**UNFCCC - Article 2.**  
 "The ultimate objective of this Convention . . is to achieve . . stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system."

NB. UNFCCC – Article 6. Stipulates the promotion of education on climate change. From 2015 referred to *Action for Climate Empowerment*

BUT before we arrive two decades later in Paris . . a difficult road is made far more difficult by 'Merchants of Doubt' . . .



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**UN Progress on Climate Change Impeded by Denialism**

**The Charney Report (1979)**  
 In July, 1979 US President Carter received a Report co-ordinated by top US meteorologist, Jule Charney:

**Carbon Dioxide and Climate: A Scientific Assessment**  
*With a doubling of CO2 the world Would warm by three degrees Celsius*

**Exxon's Response**  
 Exxon company records show it then began its own research, arguing it was needed to influence future legislation that might restrict carbon-dioxide emissions.



"It behoves us to start a very aggressive defensive program," a senior Exxon researcher wrote, "because there is a good probability that legislation affecting our business will be passed."

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**UN Progress on Climate Change Impeded by Denialism**

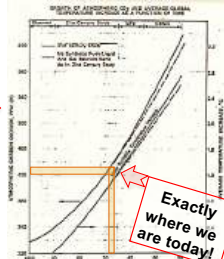
"... A doubling of CO2 would cause an average global temperature increase of 3.0°C +/- 1.5°C." **Exxon research 1982**

"The increase would not be uniform over the earth's surface with polar ice caps likely to see temperature increases on the order of 10°C and the equator little if any, increase."

Extracts from **EXXON Research and Engineering Company, Summary Report, 12<sup>th</sup> November 1982**



Equilibrium climate sensitivity is likely in the range 1.5°C to 4.5°C (high confidence)  
**IPCC, 2013. Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to Fifth Assessment Report**



Exactly where we are today!

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**UN Progress on Climate Change Impeded by Denialism**

**From 1980s, mis-information campaigns began,**  
 ... very well funded, **by rich powerful organizations & billionaires.**

**Pro-fossil fuel lobbying: extensive and systematic with messaging tied to the rising Neoliberalism economics (In US & UK).**

Politicians & Media increasingly influenced in USA, then migrating into mainstream UK Media.

**Examples of US policy 'think tanks':**  
 Oregon Institute of Science & Medicine  
 Competitive Enterprise Institute  
 George C Marshall Institute  
 American Enterprise Institute  
 Cato Institute  
 Heartland Institute

**Examples of UK policy 'think tanks':**  
 Institute of Economic Affairs  
 Civitas  
 Centre for Policy Studies  
 Global Warming Policy Foundation



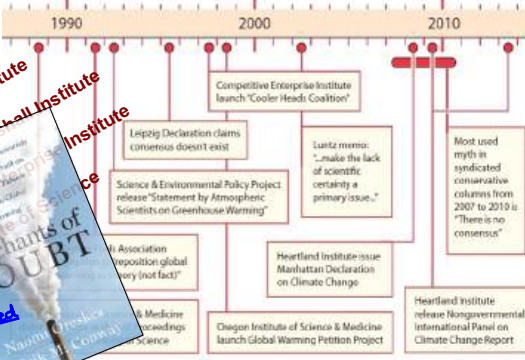
Billionaire Charles Koch With Wealth over \$50 Billion

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**UN Progress on Climate Change Impeded by Denialism**

Over Two Decades Manufacturing Doubt about Scientific Consensus



**Merchants of DOUBT**

**Recommended reading:**  
 Naomi Klein: 'The Shock Doctrine'


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**2017 UK Public opinion**  
 Survey of 1,200 UK adults by **Censuswide**  
**Q. Do you believe in Global Warming?**  
 Those who answered, 'Yes, completely':

South East:	55%
East:	52.5%
Scotland:	45%
London:	44%
North West:	44%
South West:	42%
Yorkshire & Humber:	40%
<b>East Midlands:</b>	<b>39%</b>
Wales:	34%
West Midlands:	33%
North East :	29%

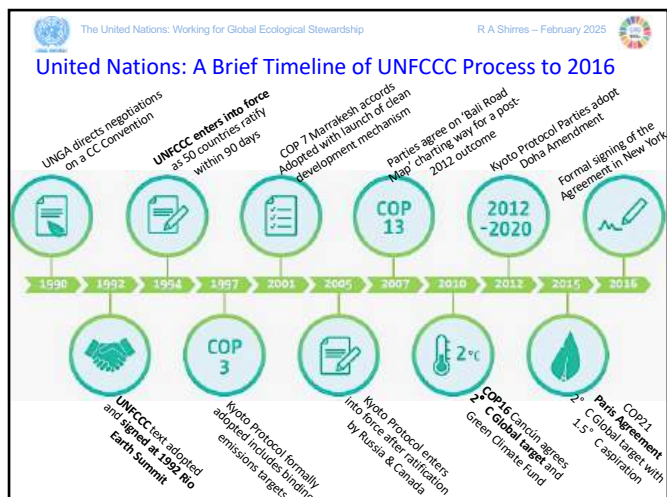
**2016 YouGov research**  
 'Out of 17 countries surveyed worldwide Britain is among the least concerned about climate change.'



**Example of 2021 YouGov research**  
**ONLY** 38% of public think CC is 'mainly' caused by human activity.

**Example of 2022 YouGov research**  
 For 'English Midlands' / Wales sample  
 33% consider earth's natural cycle has some responsibility or were unconvinced about CC.

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### COP 21 The PARIS AGREEMENT

Delivered at 19:20hrs (GMT +1) on Saturday, 12th December, 2015

**Article 2**

1. This Agreement, in enhancing the implementation of the Convention, including its objective, aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by:

(a) Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change;

(b) Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and strengthening resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions.

(IN ITS PREAMBLE) The Paris Agreement is the **first** binding multilateral climate agreement that explicitly references human rights

PARIS2015 COP21-CMP11

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### The Essential International Agreement

In the 2015 Paris Agreement, every nation in the world agreed to work together to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

**196 countries** negotiated the Paris Agreement and signed their intent to it. It entered into force on **4 November 2016**, after 55 countries had ratified the Agreement. The UK was not of one of the 55.

One of the **fastest multilateral UN agreements to have ever entered into force**, with **194\* countries** now ratified & tied it into domestic legislation.

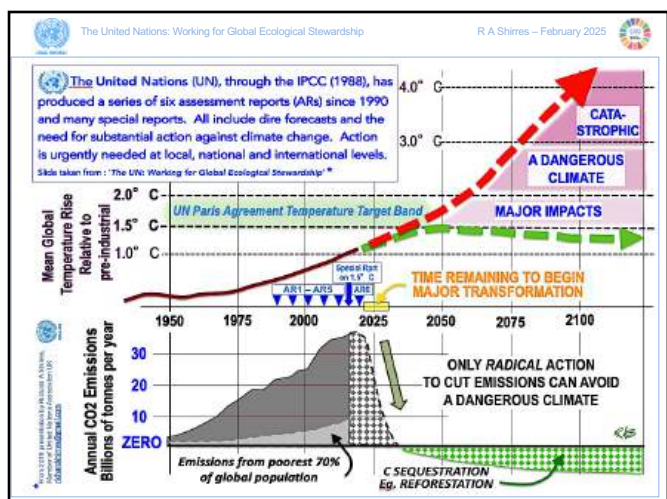
**With responsibility for 90% of man-made emissions.**

\*As of February 2025

#### THE PARIS OUTCOME

- Taipei Dialogue 2018
- Low greenhouse gas development strategies
- Cooperative approaches
- Adaptation communications registry; recognition of adaptation efforts
- Tij Clearing House for Risk Transfer
- Paris Committee on Capacity-building
- Capacity-building initiative for transparency
- Global stocktake
- Committee to facilitate implementation and promote compliance
- Technical Examination Process on Adaptation
- High-level champions
- Platform on local communities and indigenous people

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### UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – Recent Progress

Following Rio\*, the UN CBD entered into force on December 29, 1993

The CBD has three objectives:

- conservation of biological diversity,
- sustainable use of its ecological components,
- & a just sharing of benefits arising from use of genetic resources.

IPBES, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services, was set up in 2013, which lead to the commissioning of: The **Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services**.

It reported May 2019, concluding: **humans now profoundly threaten biodiversity.**

In 2022, under the UN's CBD at COP15, after a 4-year consultation & negotiation process, ground-breaking outcomes were agreed by through the **Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)**.

For **NATURE** it plans to halt & reverse nature loss, to put 30% of the planet and 30% of degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030, driven by respective Global Biodiversity Targets for 2030, with 23 action-targets classed under three headings

The **Global Biodiversity Framework** has major implications for how the stewardship of protected landscapes is exercised, including for the UK and how National Parks should be obligated to systematically manage for nature recovery.

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## Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2000 to 2015



Kofi Annan - a keen proponent of people pushing their governments to act. As UNSG he established the UN Millennium Campaign with the aims: "to mobilize the world around the MDGs" and to "rally all people" to make poverty history

*NB. Previously - no common Framework for promoting global sustainable development.*

The UN Millennium Summit in 2000, established goals for 2015.



to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;  
to achieve universal primary education;  
to promote gender equality and empower women;  
to reduce child mortality;  
to improve maternal health;  
to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;  
to ensure environmental sustainability; &  
to develop a global partnership for development.

United Nations Millennium Declaration

I. Values and principles

I. We, heads of State and Government, have gathered at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000, at the dawn of a new millennium, to reaffirm our faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

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## Sustainable Development Goals



2016 - a new set of sustainable development goals came into effect, with all UN Member States pledging to achieve **17 goals by 2030: the Sustainable Development Goals\*** (SDGs), including 169 targets.

\*Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly: "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

Ranging from eradicating poverty to ensuring clean energy for all, and reaching sustainable levels of consumption, 169 targets across these 17 Goals were selected to drive efforts in the 15 years leading to 2030.

"How well do you know the Sustainable Development Goals?"



Country	Not at all	Only their name	A little	Fairly well	Very well
France	~10%	~10%	~20%	~40%	~20%
Germany	~10%	~10%	~20%	~40%	~20%
UK	~10%	~10%	~20%	~40%	~20%
US	~10%	~10%	~20%	~40%	~20%

Source: Hudson & vanHeerde-Hudson (2016)

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The United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals



SDG 1 No Poverty

SDG 2 Zero Hunger

SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being

SDG 4 Quality Education

SDG 5 Gender Equality

SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SDGs: [un.org/sustainabledevelopment](https://un.org/sustainabledevelopment)  
DOWNLOAD THE APP: [sdgsinaction.com](https://sdgsinaction.com)

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The United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals



SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy

SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities

SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SDGs: [un.org/sustainabledevelopment](https://un.org/sustainabledevelopment)  
DOWNLOAD THE APP: [sdgsinaction.com](https://sdgsinaction.com)

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SDG 13 Climate Action

SDG 14 Life Below Water

SDG 15 Life on Land

SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE SDGs: [un.org/sustainabledevelopment](https://un.org/sustainabledevelopment)  
DOWNLOAD THE APP: [sdgsinaction.com](https://sdgsinaction.com)

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The United Nations: Sustainable Development Goals

## Dividing the SDGs into Biosphere, Society & Economy



**ECONOMY**

**SOCIETY**

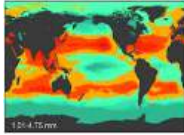
**BIOSPHERE**

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## UNEP Confronting Ocean Plastic

**Plastic Pollution in the World's Oceans: More than 5 Trillion Plastic Pieces Weighing over 250,000 Tons Afloat at Sea**  
Eriksen, et al (2014)



The global production of plastics in 2014 was 311 million tonnes. It has been estimated that in 2010 alone, between 4.8-12.7 million metric tons of plastic found their way into our oceans.

At least **71%** of all plastics ever made from virgin fossil-fuel sources were produced during the period **2000–2022\***

Production rate of virgin plastics increased from **2 Mt per year in 1950** to **504 Mt per year in 2022\***

\*<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590332240054142?via%3Dihub>

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Eriksen, et al (2014)



**14 UN FOCUS WATER**

**Goal 14 – conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**



The last decade has seen UNEP promote actions via:

- The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions in relation for sound management of chemicals and wastes;
- Appropriate bodies, such as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the OECD, to consider macroplastics, microplastics & nanoplastics;
- World Trade Organization regards trade & environment;
- Institutional financing bodies (e.g., Global Environment Facility, World Bank);
- Non-traditional groups such as trade organizations;
- UN organizations already addressing marine litter, eg. UNEP, IMO and FAO

**Nairobi, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 :**  
**At the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2). 175 nations agreed historic Resolution 5/14: to create a first-of-its-kind international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution – 'Towards an internationally legally binding treaty'.**

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## The United Nations: a SAMPLE of international meetings one month in 2018

Sixth session of the Plenary of the **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-6)** from **18-23 March 2018** in Medellin, Colombia. Preceded by the IPBES-6 Stakeholder Day on **17 March 2018**. [SDGs: 6, 14, 15]

The **Regional 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) Forum** in Asia & Pacific held its eighth meeting in **Indore, India**, from **9-12 April 2018** under the theme "Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R and Resource Efficiency – A 21st Century Vision for Asia – Pacific Communities." Meeting organized by the UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) [SDGs: 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 17]

Second meeting of the **Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI)** est. 2010) Global Dialogue with Regional Seas Organizations (RSOs) and Regional Fisheries Bodies (RFBs) on Accelerating Progress toward the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and Sustainable Development Goals convened from **10-13 April 2018** in **Seoul, Republic of Korea** [SDGs: 6, 14, 16]

Fourth **Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)** Forum convened **2-3 May 2018**, **Lisbon, Portugal** [SDGs: 7, 13]

Co-organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and its Global Soil Partnership (GSP) and **Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS)**, UN Environment, the Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions (BRS Conventions Secretariat), and the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Symposium on Soil Pollution (GSOP18) convened from **2-4 May 2018** at the FAO headquarters, in **Rome, Italy**. [SDGs: 2, 6, 15]

Fourth session of the **Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD)** convened in **Dakar, Senegal** on Thursday and Friday, **3-4 May 2018**, pre-event workshops meeting on Wednesday, 2 May 2018. [SDGs: ALL]

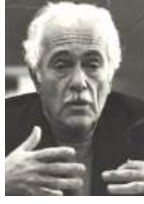
The **Bonn Climate Change Conference 30 April to 10 May 2018**. During this conference, three bodies will convene: the 48th sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 48) and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 48), and the fifth part of the first session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA 1-5). Thirteenth session of the **UN Forum on Forests (UNFF13)**, **7-11 May 2018** at UN Headquarters in **New York**. (UNFF est. 2000). [SDGs: 2, 13, 15]

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## Achieving Multilateral Consensus

### The Essence of the UN's work for global stewardship



**Aurelio Peccei (1908-1984)**  
**Founder of The Club of Rome**

"The highest quality that modern man must possess is the capacity for synthesis."  
"Techno-scientific progress itself, like the processes of living organisms, needs a regulator"  
*From a lecture given in Buenos Aires, 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1965*

The UN: at the forefront in synthesizing science, disseminating and building consensual political action.  
The UN has striven to establish international environmental frameworks & treaties that promote the requisite international law and national regulations.

"The harmonious coexistence between man and the environment is not only crucial for our future survival, but is also a fundamental cultural value."  
*Dictated by Aurelio Peccei less than 12 hours before his death*

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## The UN: Working for Global Ecological Stewardship

**OF** the fundamental problems facing humankind today, the UN was engaged with many decades ago: **that the limitations of 'Spaceship Earth' . . . "will inevitably require that its economy be based on strict ecological principles".**  
*[René Dubos wrote in The UNESCO Courier, January, 1969]*

Only our myopic complacency and politics now threatens to deny future generations a safe planet.  
While the UN has striven for the treaties to enable us to exercise global ecological stewardship.  
**The UN champions humanitarian and internationalist ideals and deserves all our support**

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**The United Nations "was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell."**  
**Dag Hammarskjöld**  
**United Nations Secretary General**  
**1953-1961**



On behalf of the **UN Association -Menai**  
Thank you for your attention  
Contact: [richardshirres@gmail.com](mailto:richardshirres@gmail.com)

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